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AND THE RED ARMY

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“A Unified Military Doctrine and the Red Army”

In the present work, written by M. V. Frunze in 1921, an exceptionally important question is examined—that of a unified military doctrine in the Red Army.

This brochure is intended for the commanding personnel of the Red Army.

A UNIFIED MILITARY DOCTRINE AND THE RED ARMY[1]

I

One of the most important questions attracting the attention of our contemporary military thought is the question of the so-called “unified military doctrine.”

It has been the subject of lively discussion in articles by a number of military specialists published in the now-defunct journal Military Affairs; it is also closely approached by the thinking of army workers, as evidenced by the minutes of many military conferences devoted to questions of reorganizing the Red Army.

All this indicates the existence of a deep theoretical and practical interest aroused by this question.

But unfortunately, beyond mere interest the matter has not yet moved forward, for to this day we not only lack attempts at systematizing teachings about our military doctrine, but even the very content of this concept remains sufficiently vague and undefined.

Characteristic in this respect is the diversity of opinions and views revealed in the articles of our old military specialists. It turned out literally according to the proverb: “As many heads, so many minds.” By the admission of the most prominent representatives of the military world, it turned out that our old General Staff possessed no definite views on this fundamental question of military

theory, and even more than that—there was no clear understanding of what the question itself consisted of, no ability to pose it correctly.

This fact, which speaks прежде всего of the extreme poverty of the military-theoretical heritage we received from the old army, is capable of provoking gloomy reflections regarding further attempts in this direction. And it must be admitted that such fears undoubtedly contain a certain degree of justification—but only a certain degree.

One need only recall the socio-political environment in which the thought of our senior comrades in military affairs developed and worked. In the atmosphere of a police autocratic system, suppressing all social and personal initiative, against the background of our general economic and political backwardness, amid extreme routinization of habits and views in all spheres of social activity, there could of course be no talk of broad scientific creativity.

All these distortions manifested themselves especially vividly in the organization of our military affairs, where inquisitive thought was mercilessly suppressed at the root and initiative was cut short. Therefore, objectively, no one can blame the old General Staff for the confusion and helplessness it displayed on a number of issues. Nevertheless, the fact remains a fact, and it must be reckoned with by all those to whom the interests of our Soviet Republic and the further development and strengthening of its military power are dear.

We believe that on the basis of the newly created social relations, in an environment that not only permits but directly demands from every honest citizen the manifestation of maximum energy and initiative, our military-theoretical thought will also rapidly develop and grow stronger.

We believe that among the old General Staff there will be not a few workers capable of casting off from their spiritual “self” the garments of the old Adam, unable to think otherwise than within narrow limits and habitual notions of a bourgeois worldview, imbued with the spirit of philistine stupidity and inertia.

In this ability to shake off the remnants of old routine, to grasp the full complexity of the phenomena of the destruction of the old world taking place around us, to adopt the viewpoint of the new social classes advancing onto the arena of life—therein lies the basic condition for the fruitfulness of the theoretical work of our specialist comrades. Practical experience acquired by many of them in the ranks of the Red Army will provide sufficient material for this work.

All this, taken together with the activity of the young generation of our military workers just spreading its wings—those who emerged during the revolutionary wars from the depths of the people—gives full confidence that in the near future the task of comprehending our military experience and developing those unified views which must form the basis of the combat training of the Red Army, and whose absence is now painfully felt by all of us from top to bottom, will rapidly move forward.

The article offered to the reader’s attention is an attempt to pose the question

of a “unified military doctrine” from the standpoint of the interests of the workers’ state and the revolution, and to outline the approximate path along which, in our view, the development of this question should proceed.

II

First of all, what does the concept of a “unified military doctrine” represent? What is the practical meaning of this idea?

The answer to this question already emerges from the most superficial glance at the essence of modern wars, the character of contemporary combat tasks, and the conditions of their resolution.

Wars of the current historical period, in comparison with the preceding era, possess a whole series of characteristic features. Whereas previously the outcome of combat clashes depended on relatively small groups of the population—either forming permanent detachments for whom war was a profession, or temporarily drawn into the ranks of troops—now entire nations almost without exception are participants in war; it is no longer thousands or tens of thousands of people who fight, but entire millions. War draws into its vortex and subordinates to itself absolutely all aspects of social life, affecting all state and social interests without exception. The theater of military operations is now not narrowly confined spaces, but vast territories with tens and hundreds of millions of inhabitants; technical means of struggle develop and become more complex without limit, creating ever new categories of specialties, branches of arms, and so forth.

Under these conditions, the fundamental requirement of military art and science—the integrity of the overall plan and strict coordination in its execution—is threatened with the greatest danger of hanging in midair. Whereas in former wars the moment of direct leadership by commanders over individual parts of the combat organism was commonplace, now this can no longer be spoken of. Meanwhile, this unity, integrity, and coordination are now needed more than ever. And they are needed not only during already unfolding combat operations, but also when preliminary preparation is under way, for as a general rule this preparatory work—both of the state taken as a whole and of its military apparatus—plays a decisive role.

The state must in advance determine the character of its general, and in particular its military, policy; outline accordingly the possible objects of its military aspirations; develop and establish a definite plan of nationwide activity that takes future clashes into account and ensures their success in advance through the expedient use of the people’s energy.

As for the military apparatus, then, basing itself on the general state program, it must adopt the organizational form that best corresponds to the general state tasks, and through further work create a firm unity of all armed forces, linked from top to bottom by common views both on the nature of military tasks themselves and on the methods of resolving them.

This work of developing unity of thought and will within the army is extraordinarily complex and difficult, and can proceed successfully only when it

is carried out systematically, on the basis of principles clearly formulated and sanctioned by the public opinion of the class leading the country.

From what has been said it is clear what enormous practical significance the doctrine of a “unified military doctrine” has for the entire matter of military construction of the Republic. It must, first of all, indicate the character of the combat clashes that await us. Should we establish ourselves on the idea of passive defense of the country, without setting or pursuing any active objectives, or should we have the latter in view? Depending on the decision of this question of military policy, the entire character of the construction of our armed forces is determined—the character and system of training of individual fighters and large troop formations, military-political propaganda, and the entire system of education of the country in general.

This doctrine must necessarily be unified, being an expression of the unified will of the social class in power.

Such is the approximate circle of general ideas and the practical tasks flowing from them that must be encompassed by the concept of a “unified military doctrine.”

As was noted above, there is no more or less generally accepted and precise formulation of this concept in our military literature. But despite the diversity of opinions expressed regarding the content of the concept of a “unified military doctrine,” the main points in most definitions approximately coincide. Based on what has been stated above, these points can be reduced to two groups:

technical, and

political.

The first includes everything that concerns the organizational foundations of building the Red Army, the character of combat training of the troops, and methods of resolving combat tasks. The second includes the moment of dependence and connection of the technical side of building the armed forces with the general structure of state life, which determines the social environment in which military work must be carried out and the very character of military tasks.

Thus, one could propose the following definition of a “unified military doctrine”:

A unified military doctrine is the teaching adopted in the army of a given state which establishes the character of the construction of the country’s armed forces, the methods of combat training of troops, and their leadership on the basis of the views prevailing in the state on the character of the military tasks confronting it and the methods of resolving them, flowing from the class nature of the state and determined by the level of development of the country’s productive forces.

This formulation by no means claims constructive completeness or full logical impeccability. Ultimately, the matter is not in this. What is important is the essential content of the concept; as for its final crystallization, that is a matter for further practical and theoretical development.

III

Having established the general logical content of a “unified military doctrine,” let us now turn to the question of the concrete practical content of this concept as applied to actually existing armies in various states.

In this respect it is particularly interesting to dwell on the example of three states possessing fully developed armed forces embodied in definite form, with clearly expressed features of a unified military ideology (military doctrine). I mean Germany, France, and England. Let us begin with the first.

Germany until very recently was a state with the most powerful military apparatus, a harmonious system of organization of the armed forces, and a completely definite military ideology, unified for the leading elements of both the army and the entire country.

The fundamental feature of the German military doctrine in its technical (i.e., purely military) part is an extremely pronounced offensive spirit. The idea of activity—seeking solutions to combat tasks through energetic, bold, and consistently conducted offensives—permeates all German regulations and manuals for senior commanders. This same idea determined the structure of the entire German military apparatus, placing at the forefront the development of operational problems and creating, in the person of the German Great General Staff, a powerful and highly authoritative organ directing all activity related to the development of military plans and combat training of the troops.

The education and training of all troops proceeded in the spirit of this offensive tactic and ultimately prepared such a military force, perfect in its structure and training, which later, on the fields of the gigantic battles of the imperialist war, fully revealed its outstanding combat qualities.

The question arises: to what or to whom did Germany owe the possession of such a qualitatively superior armed force?

The first answer to this question is already given by the fact that it educated its army on the basis of a “unified military doctrine” constructed in accordance with the conclusions of military art. But this is only the first answer. We must ask further: why did the German army receive such a doctrine, why was it imbued with it from top to bottom, whereas, for example, in Russia nothing of the sort existed, although theoretical knowledge of military art undoubtedly existed there as well?

The answer cannot be an indication of the exceptional military talents of German military figures who allegedly, by the force of their genius, discovered the secrets of victory and by creating the German military doctrine placed their army at an unattainable height. Such an explanation is childishly naïve, but it must be noted, since in the articles of some of our military specialists there often appears a tendency to reduce the essence of the question of creating a military doctrine to the actions and talents of individual outstanding persons (see, for example, such a definition: “military doctrine is the prophetic voice of military

genius,” and similar nonsense).

The basic features of the German doctrine are by no means a случайное phenomenon; they are entirely and fully derived from the general structure of German life in the period prior to the imperialist war.

Indeed, what was the German Empire at the beginning of 1914? It was a powerful economic and political capitalist state with a clearly expressed imperialist coloration—a state pursuing an openly predatory policy and, relying on its material and cultural forces, striving for world hegemony. The presence of major competitors in the form of other imperialist countries (France, England, Russia, etc.), which historically had earlier created state-national unifications and managed to seize the best portions of the global booty, forced imperialist Germany to strain all its forces in the struggle for a world position. The ruling bourgeois class in Germany subordinated the entire life of the country to this fundamental state goal—victory over competitors.

The press, science, art, school, army—everything was organized and directed by the bourgeoisie toward a single point. The bourgeoisie even managed to corrupt and subordinate to its influence significant strata of the German proletariat—a class objectively hostile to the predatory line of conduct pursued by the bourgeoisie. And on this basis, in this atmosphere of universal worship of the army and navy, on the foundation of an extremely active foreign policy that assigned the army clearly offensive tasks, no other German military doctrine could have arisen than the one we have before us.

In the personnel of the General Staff and the entire German army, and in the very personality of Emperor Wilhelm, all of Germany of self-satisfied bourgeois and landowners, confident in their strength and intoxicated with dreams of world power, was reflected in the best possible way. “Germany above all”—that was the motto that poisoned the consciousness of the majority of the German people in the era of the imperialist war. And faithful to this motto, German regiments, confidently following the principles of their doctrine, surged in a crushing torrent onto the plains of Belgium in 1914.

The very first clashes with the armies of hostile countries demonstrated the strategic and tactical correctness of the principles of the German doctrine.

Such was the situation in Germany. The main conclusion that can be drawn from this is the following: all military affairs of a given state, including the doctrine on the basis of which its armed forces are built, are a reflection of the entire structure of its life and, ultimately, of its economic existence as the primary source of all forces and resources. German generals would never have been able to create their military doctrine, nor—even if it had been created—would they have been able to instill it throughout the mass of the German army, had the corresponding conditions of German life not favored it.

IV

Let us now turn to France.

This country is also a representative of predatory imperialism. Just like the German bourgeoisie, France was always ready to seize чужое property and acted in such cases no better than “militarist” Germany. But in the actions of the French bourgeoisie there nevertheless existed a substantial difference from those of its eastern neighbor. In disputes with competitors over booty it lacked the open impudence and self-confidence characteristic of the German ruling clique. One need only recall the conflicts of 1905, 1909, and 1911 with the same Germany over Morocco and the cowardly, predatory, and evasive policy pursued by France at that time, clinging to booty slipping from its hands while lacking the resolve to begin a fight.

This peculiar character of French foreign policy was determined by the general economic and political position of the Third Republic. French industry lagged far behind in its development compared with the industry of other advanced countries; the French population for a number of years showed no tendency toward growth, and the phrase “the population remains in a stationary state” became a customary characterization of France’s population movement according to annual statistical reports. Instead of openly seizing foreign territories, which entailed the risk of becoming entangled in a heavy struggle, French capital sought other, calmer paths of exploiting foreign labor, widely entering into all kinds of deals with foreign capital for the purpose of peaceful division of the booty.

This opportunistic, self-doubting, non-active spirit of the French bourgeoisie at the helm of government also determined the general character of French military policy. Despite the presence in the French army of the richest military traditions—from the great Turenne to Napoleon—despite the brilliant examples of military art they provided in the spirit of bold, offensive strategy and tactics, the military doctrine of the army of the Third Republic yielded to the German one. It was characterized by a feeling of uncertainty in its own strength, the absence of broad offensive plans, an inability to boldly seek a decision in battle by striving to impose its will on the enemy without regard for the enemy’s will.

In its positive content, the essence of the doctrine on which the French army of the recent era was educated consisted in striving to decipher the enemy’s plan, to assume a waiting position for this purpose, and only after clarifying the situation to seek a solution through a general offensive. Such were the essential features of the French military doctrine, which left its imprint on the entire manner of action of the French army in the past war, especially in its first, maneuver period.

It should be especially emphasized here that in their individual talents French commanders hardly yield to German ones. Moreover, many of them theoretically stood not on their own viewpoint but precisely on that of the German doctrine with its spirit of the greatest activity. And yet, they were unable to change the general spirit of the French army, its entire internal structure, and the character of the views prevailing within it on methods of resolving combat problems, since this was a reflection of forces more powerful than the efforts of individual persons.

Thus, the example of France further confirms everything that we have said regarding doctrine in connection with Germany. The military structure of a given state, the character of views and moods prevailing in the military environment,

and finally the very content of the principles of military affairs are determined by the entire structure of life of the given period and, in particular, by the nature and character of the social class that is in power at that time.

As for England, its example is interesting in that, due to the geographical and historical peculiarities of its position, the attention of the ruling class was directed not toward the land army but toward the navy. England was and remains predominantly a colonial power. The exploitation of colonies was the principal source of enrichment of the British bourgeoisie, and the maintenance of colonial domination constituted its principal military task.

In connection with this, ensuring dominance at sea acquired for English capital the significance of a matter of life and death. This idea became the basic guiding principle of English military doctrine. Concretely, this was expressed in the formula obligatory for all English governments of the past era: to possess a fleet equal to the combined fleets of the two strongest naval powers. Until recently this program was steadily carried out, but now, with the appearance on the competitive arena of such a rival as the United States of America, the situation has changed, and the energy of the English bourgeoisie will have to seek some new formula ensuring its predatory policy.

A few words about the military doctrine of the Russian army in the times of tsarism.

After everything that has been said above about our military doctrine, the very posing of this question may seem strange; but a doctrine, albeit unformed, nevertheless existed in the tsarist army. And although it represented nothing positive, even on this negative example one can show the closest connection between teachings about war and the general structure of life.

The political side of this doctrine was reduced to the triune idea—Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality—driven into the heads of young soldiers during the lessons of the famous “verbal instruction.” As for its military-technical part, it appeared in our guiding manuals as a simple borrowing from foreign originals, mostly in a worsened edition; but even in this form the doctrine was a stillborn offspring of our few military theoreticians, remaining alien not only to the entire mass of the junior command personnel but even to its highest leaders. Here the unparalleled poverty, inner rot, and flabbiness of tsarist Russia of the last times were vividly revealed. Indeed, the army was always the object of special care of the tsars, and yet this very army in their hands turned out to be a force fit for nothing.

What has been изложено allows us to draw some general conclusions on the question that interests us.

First, military affairs of a given state, taken as a whole, are not a self-sufficient magnitude and are entirely determined by the general conditions of life of that state.

Second, the character of the military doctrine adopted in the army of a given state is determined by the character of the general political line of the social

class that stands at its head.

Third, the basic condition for the vitality of a military doctrine lies in its strict correspondence to the general goals of the state and to the material and spiritual resources at its disposal.

Fourth, a doctrine capable of being a living organizing principle for an army cannot be invented. All its basic elements are already given in the surrounding environment, and the work of theoretical thought consists in discovering these elements, systematizing them, and bringing them into correspondence with the basic principles of military science and the requirements of military art.

Fifth, the fundamental theoretical task of the workers of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army must be: studying the character of the surrounding social environment; determining the character and essence of the military tasks flowing from the nature of the state itself; studying the conditions ensuring their fulfillment, both in terms of material and spiritual prerequisites; studying the peculiarities of the construction of the Red Army and the methods of struggle employed in it; coordinating, with the requirements of military science and art, all those features that are objectively and inseparably linked with the character of our proletarian state and the revolutionary epoch we are experiencing.

V

What basic elements, then, must form the foundation of the military doctrine of our Workers' and Peasants' Red Army?

To answer this, let us first turn to an analysis of our state.

By its character and essence, our homeland represents a state formation of a completely new type. Unlike all other states currently existing on the globe, the RSFSR is the only state in the world where power belongs to labor. Beginning in October 1917, when the working class of Russia, leading behind it the broad masses of the laboring peasantry, wrested power from the hands of the big and small bourgeoisie, we live in a workers' and peasants' state, with the working class playing the leading role.

The fundamental idea and meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat are reduced to the task of destroying capitalist production relations and replacing them with a system based on the principles of social ownership of the means of production and planned distribution of the products of that production. This idea stands in irreconcilable contradiction to the foundations of the existence of all other states of the world, where capital still reigns everywhere.

The dictatorship of the proletariat signifies the most selfless, most merciless war of the class of working people against the class of rulers of the old world—the bourgeoisie, which, relying on the power of international capital as a whole, on the strength and solidity of its international connections, and finally on the spontaneous conservatism of petty-bourgeois masses, represents a formidable and powerful enemy of the newly emerging world.

Between our proletarian state and the entire bourgeois world there can be only one condition—a long, stubborn, desperate war to the death, a war requiring colossal endurance, discipline, firmness, steadfastness, and unity of will. The external form of these relations, depending on changing conditions and the course of the struggle, may be modified; a state of open war may give way to some form of contractual relations allowing, to a certain degree, peaceful coexistence of the warring sides. But these contractual forms are incapable of changing the fundamental character of the relations.

And it must be fully realized and openly acknowledged that prolonged parallel coexistence of our proletarian Soviet state with the states of the bourgeois-capitalist world is impossible.

The bourgeoisie, with energy multiplied by the very fact of its overthrow even in one country, in anticipation of its impending doom, cannot calm down until it destroys the focus that constitutes a breeding ground and source of danger to its worldwide power. At the first convenient opportunity, the waves of the bourgeois, capitalist sea surrounding our proletarian island will again rush upon it, striving to wash away all the gains of the proletarian revolution.

At the same time, the flames of the revolutionary conflagration flare up ever more frequently and brightly in various countries of the bourgeois world, and the ominous tramp of proletarian columns preparing for assault speaks of attempts from the other side as well. This contradiction can be resolved and overcome only by the force of arms in a bloody clash of class enemies. There is no other way out, and there can be none.

From this follows the conclusion that the consciousness of every worker, every peasant, every Red Army soldier, and above all every member of the communist workers' party directing state life, must be imbued with the thought that our country still finds itself in the position of a besieged fortress and will remain so as long as capital reigns in the world; that the energy and will of the country must continue to be directed toward the creation and strengthening of our military power; that state propaganda of the idea of the inevitability of active struggle with our class enemy must prepare that psychological environment of nationwide attention, care, and concern for the needs of the army, in the atmosphere of which alone the construction of our armed forces can proceed successfully.

This moment of nationwide consciousness of the inevitability and importance of the military tasks confronting the state is the first and most important element in the future unified military doctrine of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

Here one more feature distinguishing the doctrine of the army of a workers' state should be noted. Since bourgeoisies of all countries must impose on the working masses military goals that are essentially alien to them, this is achieved by means of all kinds of tricks—either by stirring up the basest instincts of the crowd (thirst for revenge, the wildest national chauvinism, etc.) or by mass deception. One need only recall, for example, the story of the "keys to the holy places," the Byzantine legacy (Russia), the idea of revanche (France), and so forth.

For a workers' state such as Soviet Russia, there is no need for such means of deception. The class interest of the working people in the victory of the revolution and the idea of their international solidarity as a means of ensuring that victory are entirely sufficient to create the strongest bond for the purposes of common struggle.

Are there data indicating that this element can become a living component of the worldview of the broad working masses of Russia? Undoubtedly, yes. The reserves of spiritual energy of the working class fighting for its liberation are quite sufficient; it is only necessary that their expenditure be directed in the appropriate direction and with sufficient planning and systematicity. The means to achieve this must be military propaganda organized on a state-wide scale.

The organ developing all issues related to this must become the PUR (Political Directorate), and their implementation must be carried out by all organs of public education under the general guidance of Glavpolitprosvet. Only such an organization of work can create the same environment conducive to strengthening the Republic's military power as existed in Germany. The role of the German school in this matter is sufficiently well known. One need only recall the famous phrase that "the honor of victory at Sadowa and Sedan belongs to the German schoolteacher." It is necessary that the honor of victory of the world revolution unfolding before our eyes also belong to our schoolteacher and out-of-school educator and propagandist.

As for the concrete socio-political content of this part of our future doctrine, it is entirely given to us in ready-made form in the ideology of the working class—in the program of the Russian Communist Workers' Party. The former formula of the tsarist army—"Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality"—has given way to the ideas of revolutionary communism, Soviet power as a specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the international brotherhood and solidarity of the working people.

The three years of activity of the political departments and communist cells of the Red Army have already brought sufficiently tangible results in the sense of political education of the broad Red Army masses in a new spirit, and by continuing further in the same direction must prepare for us a unified armed force, firmly welded from top to bottom by the unity of political ideology.

The main task of the current day in this respect, alongside deepening and expanding political work at the lower levels, is the work of integrating our command personnel into the general Red Army mass. The state must, with the full weight of its influence, put an end in the shortest possible time to those remnants of political disunity that are still observed in the Red Army. People with an ideology hostile to the ideas of labor must be removed from it.

This does not at all mean the necessity for all command personnel of the Red Army to become members of the Communist Party. But it does mean achieving such a situation that the command staff becomes in fact Soviet, that any ground for political suspicion toward it disappears, and that full unity and mutual understanding between it and the lower ranks, the rank-and-file Red Army mass, are felt.

VI

To the question of the character of the military tasks that may confront us—namely, whether they should be strictly defensive or whether the Red Army of the Republic should be ready, if necessary, to pass to the offensive—a completely definite answer follows from all the preceding considerations.

The general policy of the working class, a class active by nature, a class striving for victory over the entire bourgeois world, cannot but be active to the highest degree. True, if one considers only the material resources of one's own country, the limits of this activity become rather narrow and are determined at present by the level of economic development and our general position today. It is therefore possible that for a certain period the actively revolutionary energy of the working class will not be directed toward achieving goals of the current order. But this fact does not change the essence of the matter.

To politics, the principle of higher strategy fully applies: "Only he who finds within himself the determination to attack will win; the side that merely defends itself is inevitably doomed to defeat." By the very course of the historical revolutionary process, the working class will be compelled to pass to the offensive against capital when favorable conditions arise. Thus, at this point we have a complete coincidence of the requirements of military art and general policy.

As for the material provision of the possibility of pursuing this offensive line, one should take into account the circumstance that the base of our offensive may be not only Russia alone, but also a whole number of other countries. Everything depends on the degree of maturity of the revolutionary process within those countries and the ability of their working class to come out into open struggle against its class enemy.

The class character of the forthcoming clashes, ensuring assistance to us in the interests of the common cause from all proletarian elements, largely eliminates the negative significance of the heavy economic condition of our country mentioned above. Thus, the proletariat can and will attack, and together with it, as its principal weapon, the Red Army will also attack.

From this follows the necessity of educating our army in the spirit of the greatest activity, preparing it to complete the tasks of the revolution through energetic, resolute, and boldly conducted offensive operations.

If we turn to the combat experience already possessed by the Red Army, we will see that in essence it has long been acting precisely in this spirit. Almost all significant operations of the Civil War bear the marks of the manifestation of activity and initiative on our side. One might even say that at times this activity, overflowing its bounds, borders on an inability to take into account the data of the concrete situation of the day and to avoid the danger of excessive risk.

All this is entirely natural, for in an army created and led by the proletariat no

mood other than an active one could exist.

VII

The active character of future military clashes mentioned above presents a whole series of practical requirements to our General Staff. It is necessary to organize the work of the higher staffs in such a way that the Red Army can carry out its tasks in any operational direction and in any sector of the possible future front. The boundaries of this front in the near future are determined by the limits of the entire continent of the Old World.

Incidentally, the training of our command personnel must include knowledge not only of purely military, but also of economic and political conditions of possible theaters of military operations. Here an enormous prospect of preparatory work opens up before the military apparatus in general.

Analyzing the probable situation of our future military clashes, we can foresee in advance that in technical terms we will undoubtedly be weaker than our opponents. This circumstance has extremely serious significance for us, and we must, in addition to straining all forces and means to achieve technical perfection, seek ways that could at least to some degree compensate for this unfavorable aspect.

Some means for this exist. The first and most important of them is the preparation and education of our army in the spirit of large-scale maneuver operations.

The size of our territories, the possibility of retreating over considerable distances without losing the ability to continue the struggle, and so forth, provide favorable ground for the application of strategic maneuvers, that is, maneuvers outside the battlefield. Our command personnel must be educated primarily in the ideas of maneuvering, and the entire mass of the Red Army must be trained in the art of rapidly and systematically carrying out march maneuvers.

The experience of the past imperialist war in its initial stage, as well as the entire experience of our Civil War, which bore predominantly a maneuver character, provides the richest material for study in this regard.

In connection with this, in the general economy of our military means, engineering defense and offense, which played such a colossal role in the imperialist war, must recede into the background in our army. The auxiliary role assigned to this branch of arms should be reduced to serving as an auxiliary means for field operations. The use of terrain, wide application of its artificial fortification, the creation of artificial temporary lines ensuring the execution of a general march maneuver—this is the sphere of application of forces and means of this order. In particular, the role and significance of fortresses in our future operations will be entirely negligible. Instead of fortresses, it will be far more expedient to strengthen field troops.

The second means of combating the technical advantages of the enemy army we see in preparing the conduct of partisan warfare in the territories of possible theaters of military operations. If the state devotes sufficiently serious attention to this, if the preparation of this “small war” is carried out systematically and

methodically, then by this path as well it is possible to create for the enemy armies such an environment in which, despite all their technical advantages, they will prove powerless against a comparatively poorly armed but initiative-filled, bold, and resolute opponent.

Once again, the experience of our Civil War provides us with the richest material in this regard. The actions of partisans in Siberia, the struggle in the Cossack regions, “Basmachism” in Turkestan, “Makhnovism” and banditry in Ukraine in general, etc., represent an immense field for study and theoretical generalization. But a mandatory condition for the fruitfulness of this idea of “small war,” I repeat, is its advance development and the creation of all conditions ensuring the success of its broad deployment. Therefore, one of the tasks of our General Staff must become the development of the idea of “small war” as applied to our future wars with an opponent technically superior to us.

In connection with the same maneuver character of our future operations, the question arises of revising from this angle the role and significance of cavalry in modern combat. The positional character of the past imperialist war created in many minds the idea that cavalry, as an independent active force, can no longer play a significant role and must recede into a secondary position.

True, the experience of the Civil War once again provided brilliant examples of independent actions of cavalry both on our side and on that of our opponent, restoring its former significance; but it is known that the experience of the Civil War alone is not considered sufficiently convincing by all, and therefore the question cannot yet be considered fully clarified for everyone.

In our deep conviction, in future operations the Red cavalry will play an extraordinarily important role, and therefore care for its preparation and development must be one of our foremost duties.

For the purpose of its best preparation for the fulfillment of combat tasks, special attention must be paid to the study of the colossal experience of the Civil War and to the development, on the basis of this study, of special manuals for senior cavalry commanders.

VIII

Organizationally, the basis of our armed forces for the near period can only be a standing Red Army. This follows from everything that has been said about the general character of our combat tasks. At present, this question may be considered finally resolved in connection with the corresponding resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party and subsequent government decrees. Transition to a militia system based on universal military training is permissible only to the extent that it allows certain savings in state expenditures without undermining the Red Army’s ability to resolve active tasks.

As for the internal life of the Red Army, it must be built in the direction of maximum approximation to the ideals of communist communal life. Of course, at the given level of development of productive forces, propaganda of complete equality of command personnel with the rank-and-file mass is unrealizable and can be

conducted only by those interested in destroying the solidity and power of the Red Army. This is clear to the overwhelming majority of Red Army soldiers. But nevertheless, the internal structure and order of the army of the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet state must be free of all privileges not dictated by service requirements and not flowing from its character. Only on this basis is it possible to create that comradely cohesion and mutual understanding between the upper and lower ranks of the army which are the principal guarantee of the physical and spiritual power of the Red Army.

In drill training, the element of drill discipline in the Red Army must recede to the very background; moreover, the very concept of "drill" must be completely changed. There can be no talk of drill in the old sense of the word, i.e., in the sense of purely mechanical training in drill elements accompanied by harsh measures of coercion. We have no need to strive to achieve such parade-ground polish as was the ideal for all kinds of lovers of parades and outward show. It is sufficient to achieve a certain orderliness, speed, and correctness in the execution of specific formations. Mechanical automatism is not required; everything must be built on achieving these effects through the maximum development of personal initiative and independence of each Red Army soldier.

In this respect, the characteristic features of our state and our army open the broadest prospects. We have full opportunity to build the unity of the army not through baton discipline, but through the maximum intellectual development of Red Army soldiers. While every bourgeois state must fear the spread of knowledge and the development of spiritual activity among the slaves of capital, for us this very development is the surest guarantee of victorious achievements. The entire apparatus of training the individual fighter must be adapted accordingly.

The maintenance of service discipline in the ranks of the army is an obligatory and absolutely necessary condition of its power, and in this respect the demands of the Soviet state are the most resolute. But again, between the modern understanding of discipline and what existed in the tsarist army lies an entire abyss. Discipline in the Red Army must be based not on fear of punishment and naked coercion, but on the voluntary, conscious fulfillment by each person of his service duty, and the first example of such discipline must be given by the command personnel.

By what must discipline be maintained? First, by the consciousness of the advanced part of the Red Army mass, its communist cells, its political instructors, and the entire command staff—their steadfastness, devotion to the revolution, heroism, and self-sacrifice. Second, by the ability of the command personnel to connect with, draw closer to, and to some degree merge with the broad Red Army mass. Third, by the correctness of its political and technical leadership, by strengthening the faith of the Red Army mass in the full correspondence of commanders to their appointment. Outside these conditions, maintaining discipline in a revolutionary army such as our Red Army is a hopeless matter. Of course, it is impossible to do without any elements of coercion at all, but their application must be kept within the narrowest limits. Only he can be recognized as a true Red commander who achieves complete subordination to his will without any coercive measures.

Such, in general outline, must be the basic elements of the military doctrine on

the basis of which the development and strengthening of the power of the Soviet Federation must proceed. In order to fulfill its purpose, the ideas of the doctrine must penetrate and imbue all our military regulations, manuals, and so forth; they must become an organic part of the worldview of the Red Army mass, and especially of its command component. It seems entirely expedient to set forth the basic practical provisions flowing from the essence of the doctrine separately in a special regulation, which would serve as the fundamental catechism of the Red Army.

Such is the approximate circle of general ideas which, it seems to me, must become close to all those engaged in developing questions of military theory in its general part. Undoubtedly, what has been изложено is only an attempt to pose the question and draw attention to it. As for its resolution, this can only be the result of prolonged and persistent work of military-theoretical thought on the basis of collective experience.

It remains to express the most ardent wish that the development of the question of the doctrine of the Red Army should occupy in our literature and in our practical activity the place which by right belongs to it by virtue of its special significance for the cause of building the armed forces of the Republic.

Under the supervision of the editor
Colonel N. E. Podorozhny

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